Accidents in Air Force

748. SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that accidents in the Air Force are increasing;

(b) if so, the steps taken to minimise the accidents; and

(c) whether any sabotage is taking place in the training centres?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) The number of flying accidents of IAF which was about 30 per year in the previous decade, has fallen to an average of 22 accidents per year in the current decade. There have been only 13 accidents in the IAF during 1997-98 which is the lowest figure since the formation of the IAF.

However, every accident in the IAF is investigated by a Court of Inquiry. Inquiries have revealed that the main cause of flying accidents are Human Error, Technical Defects and Bird Strike. A High Powered Committee under the Chairmanship of Scientific Advisor to Raksha Mantri has done an in-depth study of the accidents and has made certain recommendations to reduce the number of accidents. A task Team has been constituted to ensure the time bound implementation of the recommendations of the High Powered Committee. Further, steps are also being taken by the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Urban Affairs & Employment and the State Governments concerned for modernisation of slaughter houses/carcass utilisation centres and for sanitisation of areas around airfield to reduce bird activities.

(c) There is no case reported of any sabotage in the training centres.

Participation in pay disparities agitation

749. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that certain IAF persons belonging to the technical wing were allegedly tortured for their participation in the pay disparities agitation;

(b) if so, whether Government have enquired into the matter to know the factual position;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) what action has been taken by Government in the even of the allegations of torture found to be true?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (d) Air Hqrs have reported that there was no torture of personnel belonging to technical wing. Government have however, received some petitions which are under examination.

Special drive to recruit youths in Army

750. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO:
DR. MOHAN BABU;
SHRI SANJAY DALMIA:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to launch a special drive to recruit youths in Army;

(b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the details of places where recruitment drive is likely to be started during the current financial year, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) No, Sir. Recruitment in Army is carried out in open rallies regularly and response to these rallies is very satisfactory.

(c) Does not arise.

Accidents of ageing IAF aircrafts

751. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Chief of Air Staff had expressed concern over accidents due to technical defects in some of the IAF's ageing aircrafts; and

(b) if so, the efforts being made to improve the design features of the ageing aircrafts to extend their life?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The basic design feature of an aircraft cannot be changed in an effort to extend its life, especially in ageing aircraft. However, a number of steps have been taken to improve the design features of vital aircraft components. The manufacturers and other agencies are also associated for the purpose.

Further a High Powered Committee constituted by the Government under the Chairmanship of Scientific Advisor to Raksha Mantri has also reviewed the entire accident scenario and has interalia made recommendations to improve upon the design features.

Inter Continental Ballistic Missile

752. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India propose to develop Inter Continental Ballistic Missile with a range of 3000 Km and above; and

(b) if so, the target set for this purpose?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) No Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Firing by Pakistan

753. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of times Pakistan resorted to unprovoked firing across Indo-Pak border and the Line of Actual Control during the last six months;

(b) the number of soldiers and civilians killed and injured in these incidents; and

(c) the steps taken or proposed to be taken to ensure that this firing is stopped?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) Details of firing incidents and casualties suffered along the Line of Control and International Border (IB) portion of Indo-Pak border in J&K during the past six months (01 November 1997 to 30 April 1998) are as follows:—

	No. of incidents	Army		BSF		Civilians	
		K	W	K	W	K	W
Line of control	859	5	28	1	—	—	2
IB	168	—	1	—	5	—	9

(K = killed, W= Wounded)

2. Appropriate response is given by our troops to the firing of Pakistani troops, taking due care that the incidents remain localised and our casualties are minimal.

3. There has been no firing incident along the International Border in Punjab, Rajasthan & Gujarat during the last 6 months.

Disposal of quarters of Contonment Board, Agra

754. SHRIMATI MALTI SHARMA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Director General (Contonments) had sought the opinion of Contonment Board, Agra to dispose of Shakti nagar Colony quarters to its occupants and a resolution No. VI, dated 30.9.1989 amended on 20.12.1989 was passed by the Contonment Board, Agra to sell these quarters to its present occupants; and

(b) if so, what steps have so far been taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) A proposal from Director General Defence Estates is pending before Government for disposal of Shakti Nagar Colony quarters. It is under consideration.

Modernisation of Armed Forces

755. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal for casting off flab and adding the muscle to our armed